Archaeological Notes for Buckden Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan (Barry Jobling 2020)

Archaeological excavations have been carried out in and around Buckden for over 100 years and have revealed a surprising record of humans living here for over 300,000 years. The earliest finds have been two Stone Age flint hand axes, one found near the Village Hall and another near the junction of Church and Silver Streets, made and used by the predecessors of Homo Sapiens. Of a similar date, c.500,000-200,000 BC., are flint blades and a reindeer antler tool found in a field north-east of Silver Street and Bishops Way and mammoth teeth found in gravel pits on Margett's farm nearer the River Great Ouse.

A Bronze Age (c.2,500-1,000 BC.) settlement was uncovered by the A14 dig north of Mill Road in 2015 and another north-east of Bishops Way in 2016.

Margett's Farm also covers an Iron Age (c.800BC–42 AD.) settlement and a later Roman (c.43-410 AD.) settlement and vineyard. Further Roman settlements have been found at the Stirtloe and Leadens Lane junction, in fields north-east of Silver Street and Bishops Way, and another containing significant pottery and tiles found in the 1960s adjacent to Bishops Way and Greenway. Roman coins from the 2nd to 4th centuries were recovered near the Manor House, the church and Towers, Monks Cottages and several in Church Street.

A 10th century, boat-shaped Viking building was discovered just north of the roundabout in 1961, now under the A1. Norman and medieval (1066-1539 AD.) sites were excavated in the Towers in the 1920s and of course the parish church contains much medieval material.

The major excavation of 2019 off Lucks Lane revealed Buckden to be an important village in times past, including the Stone Age period (many flints were found) and the fifty Bronze Age cremations dating to around 1,500 BC. recovered near the Shell Garage indicating another Bronze Age settlement possibly between there and the parish church. A large, Iron Age (c.800 BC–42 AD.) double-ditched enclosure was found extending under Springfield Close and The Osiers. The whole site will take several years to evaluate, but initial thoughts are included in these notes.

Also noted were Roman ditches, quarries, pottery, coins and tiles, probably indicating a Roman building in the vicinity of The Osiers, the cemetery or the Surgery.

The most remarkable discovery at Lucks Lane was a large, high status Anglo-Saxon estate dating from c.650 AD. to the 11th century, between The Osiers and the A1, which extends towards the village centre of the church and Towers. Current thought is that the Anglo-Saxon estate and village had monastic links but further research is required. Finds from this period are much scarcer than from Roman or Norman times and are important in completing our knowledge of these Dark Ages. The estate remains include the largest Anglo-Saxon hall in Britain, the largest living/working building in Britain, a probable malting/brewing house, a possible early church and almost twenty other significant buildings and features. Finds included a Christian cross brooch, Roman and Anglo-Saxon coins, ceramics, knives, glass, combs, weaving and other tools and farming implements.